

Dear Nancy-Stephanie,

12/3/75

Unless you feel uncomfortable, let us be less formal.

I'd have written you earlier about another aspect of this matter were it not that I had an atypical and undetected case of phlebitis. For me my physical activity is and probably for a while will be limited. It slows me down, so apologies for the uncorrected typos.

Please you and your professor do not misread my bluntness. I have no expectation of going to what is sometimes called a reward in the near future. I'm adjusting to this illness and can and do still function as few can or do, which can be taken as boasting but isn't. But a realization has been added to the recognition long ago that what I have undertaken would mean an overly-ambitious career for one in his 20s and I'm 62. I think it was probably right before you first wrote me, when for the first time in my life I was seriously ill, with pneumonia and pleurisy. This made me more anxious than for years I have been for others to take over what others can. Intermittently and without success over the years I had made foundation approaches in the futile hope that what I wanted and want to do could be helped. Aside from making better arrangements for an archive it means working with people like you, particularly pre-law and political-science students. Some of this you knew.

I've moved my typewriter to where I can't keep your letter near it. I read the letter some hours ago. I'll respond as things come to mind and then reread what you said that I may have forgotten.

My offer to you is not limited to the executive-session transcripts I have and the two plus a0 pages I have not yet shaken loose and have filed for. (C.A.75-1448.) It includes what is relevant, however you see relevance, preferably after talking to me and Howard, who may or may not be able to get here if and when you do. He is in the second year at Univ. Fla. Law School (Gainesville, 4.0 average.) It also is not for a thesis or book on the JFK assassination. It is something I'm close to astounded your prof can't see without trouble, to something without precedent, all or close to it of the Top Secret deliberations of a Presidential Commission with access to a more than adequate selection of its formerly withheld papers to be compared with what was and was not decided in such secrecy the staff was not trusted. Believe me, you and professor, our government will never make this possible again. You'll be getting the 1/22/64 text as transcribed for me, of all places, at the Pentagon. Between this and that of 1/27 which you have in WW IV he should get an idea of the potential. And there are perhaps 300 typed if unread pages of a draft I started years ago when I planned a book of different orientation. You can use this, too.

I don't see how you can really structure this without having done the work and reaching your own conclusions, not mine. As you can see, although I don't know you and know nothing about you I'll take this risk with no more than the specified share if it makes a book and the loss of a book if it doesn't.

But ought not the first and only complete or close to complete record of this kind in history be unusual enough and official enough and important enough for there to be an agreement that the material itself is worth a thesis and then an agreement on the focus? Here you have the nation's most eminent with as neigh to sacred a responsibility as men ever had when they expected perpetual secrecy and did not anticipate a devil with an insatiable love of scripture and the durability to pursue that love. I am willing to go farthur, but it should be obvious that I'm trying to avoid preconditioning you. I ~~think~~ think you must be independent in this. I also think you'll loose some of this independence as soon as you start reading Post Nortem and I want you to be aware of it. You will then learn and get the most solid documentation for the certainty that the "investigation" began with a conclusion and the sole purpose of what followed was to lend as much credibility as could be to the impossible. Reach your own conclusions on why. To this end you can use my files and tapes subject only to a few if any restrictions

relating to other books I have started and feel I can't turn over to others. Here the restriction would not be on the transcripts but might be on some of the other work I've done. The one thing that comes to mind has to do with the possibility of Oswald's federal connections.

Perhaps a phone conversation of the three of us could help. There will remain the question of my judgement. There are two professional historians/political scientists your prof. might want to consult first. One the David Wrone, Univ. Wisc., Stevens Point, the other is Gerald McKnight, at the local Hood College. Both have doctorates. Both have some knowledge of the field, Wrone more. (I avoid the journalistic but perhaps your prof saw what Jack Anderson (really Les Whitten) said recently of me.

Frankly, a study of the Commission centering around the members and their deliberations, as compared with their work and report and suppressed evidence ought be the material for a first-rate thesis and a book for which there could be demand for years, from the general public as well as student. Even the Congress has never made such a study. I hope in the end to be able to trigger such a study, of the use of Presidential Commission to accomplish otherwise impossible political objectives. They have become a nation curse and a great danger to representative society, as I see it.

One of the things that encourages me about you is your ability to identify the phonies and self-seekers, the commercializers and the paranoids. I am completely separated from those people, who regard me as an enemy and a danger to their lusts. One of my problems is undoing the harm they do, particularly now and with the Congress. What you say of Lane is typical. He didn't even do all his own original work and began as a plagiarist. He is an able man with more hangups than I'd care to try to list. He has been using my work as his own for years and I've done nothing to be able to do what I can that can be constructive. With the changed political situation this may have to change. To this end, if you can get a tape of the speech to which you referred I'd like it.

As an investigator Garrison as well as Lane couldn't find pubic hair in an overused and under-cleaned bordello. The one thing that was tossed into Lane's lap, the former FBI clerk, he didn't know enough to do anything about and began immediate improvisations on what the man really said. I was there. Virtually without exception these are ripoff artists who can't even steal honestly.

This may get to one of the unexpressed reservations your prof may have. If it were possible to arrange some kind of appearance with me in the Boston area - and I now for the first time have an exclusive lecture-bureau contract - it would provide the means of my travelling and of your and your professor talking with me about this in greater depth and detail. I'd welcome a confrontation format, with anyone from the AIB to Lloyd Weinreb, a former Commission staffer I think is at Harvard. (Belin's recent change of position is what I set out to and did accomplish at Vanderbilt 11/19.)

I'll not profess unselfishness in this. I detest those who are ripping off young minds while they filch and commercialize. But with all of this centered in and around Boston, I can understand that your prof can have reservations and questions. Meanwhile, as you and if he looks your prof will see there is the incredible and the official and the new in Post Mortem for all its literary liabilities about which, given the realities of my life, I could do nothing.

You once mentioned Chayes to me. Now you refer to the unethical and unconscionable by the respect Tad Szulc. I ask you if you ever mentioned any of this to Chayes. I made a proposal to the New Republic a year ago and never got a response and then this angled treatment which, among other things, make all the disclosures appear as the decently-motivated act of federal beneficence. He and NR and the extensive syndication make no reference to how all this came out, enough to ask questions about. I do not regard Szulc as the independent, detached reporter he pretends to be and not without reason. What I am really wondering is if Chayes spoke to some of his old associates, etc....

I regret that Lowenstein for whatever reason seems to have thrown himself in with the AIB gang. I'd thought better of his judgement

I can't begin to update you on the politics of all of this, including the internecine warfare, inside the government among the so-called "critics" most of whom are nothings. In the future there will be a great study of how all the rats are trying to keep all the others on the sinking ship.

Meanwhile, to address what you suggested, the major problem in and with the Congress is the evil influence of these people who have means and time and are articulate. To date this has meant that nothing would eventuate.

The Szulc writing was a mere skimming and had its own angle. You have no idea of the enormity and the complexity of what you can be getting into if as you should you do more than read a stack about three inches high now. The real scholarship will lie in first comprehending this and all the subtleties and then bracketing it with the realities, with the major problem other than encompassing all of it being elimination. There is that much too much.

Sorry I'm so snowed down and overloaded (I also have all the copies of Post Mortem to package) can't correct this. Perhaps it will be easier if you read with a fine-pointed pen or pencil and correct as you go.

Howard, who copes with fewer problems, might be helpful to you if you continue to have a problem with your prof. Let me know if you want to write or call him.

Good luck! I have a feeling you would do this the way I'd like.

Sincerely,

Harold Weisberg